

Message Text

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ACTION SS-30

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /031 W

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R 171430Z DEC 73

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8559

INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY KABUL

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

CINCPAC

S E C R E T NEW DELHI 14829

EXDIS

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS PFOR IN PK

SUBJECT: ARMS SALES OR AID TO SUBCONTINENT

REF: ISLAMABAD 10832

1. WE ARE IN COMPLETE AGREEMENT WITH AMBASSADOR BYROADE'S OBSERVATION TO BHUTTO AND AZIZ AHMED THAT THE IDEAL ANSWER TO THE PROBLEM OF THE ARMS RATIO ON THE SUBCONTINENT IS AN IMPROVEMENT IN INDO-PAKISTON RELATIONS AND THAT ARMS SALES TO ONE SIDE INEVITABLY PRODUCE PRESSURES FOR THE OTHER SIDE TO ESCALATE ITS OWN PROCURMENT.

2. MUTUAL ARMS REDUCTIONS IN THE SUBCONTINENT IS AN IDEA WE HOPE BOTH PAKISTAN AND INDIA WILL DECIDE TO PURSUE. PROGRESS IN THIS AREA, HOWEVER, ALMOST CERTAINLY MUST AWAIT GENERAL RELAXATION F TENSIONS AND SUSPICIONS, AND THE GRADUAL IMPROVEMENT IN RELATIONS ANTICIPATED IN THE SIMLA AGREEMENT. WE NOTE THAT WHEN BHUTTO TALKED ABOUT ARMS REDUCTIONS IN
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HIS "MEET THE PRESS" INTERVIEW SEPTEMBER 23, HE WAS VERY CAUTIOUS. HE EMPHASIZED THIS WAS A PROBLEM WHICH THE INDIANS AND PAKISTANIS WOULD HAVE TO PURSUE BILATERALLY AND THAT IT WAS PREMATURE TO DISCUSS IT THEN. MRS. GANDHI DIDN'T MOVE THINGS

FORWARD WITH HER "OFF THE SARI" SCOFFING AT THE PROPOSAL ON THE GROUNDS IT WAS DESIGNED TO BRING ABOUT PARITY BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES. NOW BHUTTO SUGGESTS THAT IN THINKING OF INDO-PAK ARMS RATIOS, HE IS MORE INTERESTED IN QUALITY OF WEAPONS THAN QUANTITY. WE BELIEVE THAT WE SHOULD ENCOURAGE THE INDIANS AND PAKS TO DISCUSS ARMS LIMITATIONS IF OUR OPINION IS ASKED. BUT BHUTTO HIS RIGHT THAT THIS IS AN AREA WHICH THE TWO SDES HAVE TO WORK OUT THEMSELVES. IF WE BECAME IMPLICIT PARTIES TO SUCH NEGOTIATIONS THROUGH DISCUSSIONS WITH PAKISTAN ON IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF PAKISTAN'S ARMED FORCES, WE QUITE PROBABLY WOULD HINDER RATHER THAN HELP PROSPECTS FOR IMPROVED INDO-PAKISTAN RELATIONS UD PROGRESS ON REDUCTION OF FORCES.

3. BHUTTO'S INTERVIEW WITH AN INDIAN NEWSMAN DEC 15 (SEPTEL) ON IMPROVING INDO-PAKISTAN TIES AND MOVING AHEAD ON RESUMING DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS, TRADE, TRAVEL, AND COMMUNICATIONS IS GOOD NEWS IF BHUTTO IS SERIOUS. WE WILL BE TOUCHING BASE WITH THE INDIANS IN THE NEXT DAY OR SO ON THEIR REACTION AND, IF ASKED, WILL CERTAINLY AGREE THE INDIANS SHOULD PROBE FURTHER, AND PROMPTLY. THE INDIANS ARE, HOWEVER, ENORMOUSLY SUSPICIOUS OF BHUTTO WHO THEY ARE CONVINCED SAYS DIFFERENT THINGS TO DIFFERENT PEOPLE FOR HIS OWN REASONS. AS WHO DOES NOT IN THIS PART OF THE WORLD. OR ANY OTHER PART FOR THAT MATTER.

4. WITH THE SUBJECT OF ARMS POLICY COMING UP WITH INCREASING FREQUENCY, OUR INTELLIGENCE REGARDING SOVIET INVOLVEMENT IN AFGHANISTAN BECOMES INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT. WE NOTE CONSIDERABLE DIVERGENCE OF VIEW REGARDING HOW MANY SOVIET TANKS, IF ANY, HAVE BEEN SHIPPED SOUTH. WE HOPE THAT THIS INTELLIGENCE CAN BE REFINED IN VIEW OF ITS IMPORTANCE. MOYNIHAN

SECRET

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